

Top of the Hill Newsletter



Fall
2022

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Co-Presidents' Letter

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Greetings! We hope you all had a wonderful summer.

It's been a busy season for a lot of our members as we get close to the finish line on our revitalization of Admiral Luce Park. The story below provides an update and some photos. New benches and several new trees should arrive in November and in the Spring, respectively.

In this issue:

1. Claire O'Donnely has her usual timely and excellent gardening advice
2. Mike Margonis, Historian provides us some insight into our neighborhood's past residents
3. Councilor Charlie Holder updates us on some issues that are relevant to all of us on the Top of the Hill

Don't forget to vote on Tuesday, November 8th!!!

Speaking of voting, we're looking forward to seeing a lot of you at this Sunday's (October 30th) Annual Meeting. Aside from voting to pick our elected officials, there will be a lot to discuss. Many of you have already held office in TOH or participated in committees and groups. We need to tap that experience and energy to increase the size and productivity of our committees, as well as to bring both tried-and-true "best practices" and new perspectives to our activities and our elected offices. We also need to seriously think about how to grow our Association again now that pandemic-related restrictions have been reduced.

We also look forward to celebrating the holiday season with you all at the annual Holiday Party at Edward King House on Sunday, December 4th.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. As always, we encourage any feedback and ideas about future content.

Please contact us at TOHinfo@topofthehill.org or santiago.r.neville@icloud.com.

Stay safe and stay tuned!

Maureen and Sandy Neville

Second Ward Councilor's Corner with City Councilor Charlie Holder

Greetings! Welcome back to the second edition of Councilor's Corner. Now that summer season is starting to wind down and Election season is fully upon us, we are starting to ramp up the action at City Hall. A few items on our agenda and coming up quickly include our vote on whether to change the tax structure for property owners who are residents of Newport or own property that they rent out on a yearly basis. The commercial tax rate will remain unchanged. The first of two votes will be Wednesday Oct. 26th and the second on Nov. 16th.

We are awaiting plans from the developers of the Newport Casino property in the North End, hopefully in the next couple weeks. This will be our first look at any proposals and direction for the land.

Last week we had a first look at a proposal for Easton's Beach redesign. It was quite the presentation as the architects did a great job with incorporating environmental resiliency with a modern look.

Lastly, Election Day is Tuesday November 8th. The race for the at-large seats looks like it could be very close with some fresh-faced candidates in the running. I am running unopposed for the 2nd Ward, as are the other two ward races. I have thoroughly enjoyed my first 2 years as a City Councilor, despite the rough start in trying to get acclimated due to Covid restrictions and Zoom meetings. It is much better being in person and in front of the constituents. I hope to really get going starting my second term now that I'm more entrenched in the position and familiar with the ins & outs of our city government. I'm looking forward to continued development of the North End, the short-term rental saga as well as redefining outdoor dining to make the balance between residents and businesses a lot smoother.

Please feel free to reach out to me at cholder@cityofnewport.com for any questions or concerns.

Admiral Luce Park Revitalization Project Update

The Admiral Luce Park revitalization effort is nearing completion. Progress since the Summer Newsletter includes:

On September 15th, Newport Public Services removed the two old benches, the hedge along the Rhode Island Avenue abutter property, one cherry tree stump and the concrete monument slab.

On September 18th, several volunteers marked and edged the perennial woodland garden bed extension in preparation for the delivery of ten cubic yards of raised bed mix from Earth Care Farm on the 21st. At the volunteer day was held on September 24th, 12 volunteers spread the soil mix, weeded, and edged.

Between September 28th and October 6th, local mason Joe Hall and his wife Marilyn laid three new concrete slabs for the new benches.

On October 6th, seven TOH members planted 60 native shrubs in the perennial woodland garden bed. Plantings included hummingbird summersweet, redosier dogwood, dwarf and mount airy fothergilla, densa inkberry, and winterberry shrubs.

On October 16th we held a volunteer day in coordination with Make Every Block Better (MEBB) Grant Sponsors H&R Block and Nextdoor. Over 40 people came to the park to spread woodchip mulch, plant daffodil bulbs, and celebrate the near completion of the Luce Park restoration. Grant sponsors provided t-shirts, lunch, and refreshments.

The remaining restoration work includes:

The three new park benches which were ordered in August should be delivered and ready for installation by City Public Services personnel in November.

The four trees that several TOH members generously sponsored through the Newport Tree Conservancy will be planted next Spring. One Accolade Elm will be planted to replace the girdled Elm tree along Rhode Island Ave and three June Snow Dogwood trees will be planted in the perennial woodland garden behind each of the benches. As these dogwood trees mature the existing cherry trees in the back of the perennial bed, which are past the age of their average lifespan, and showing signs of distress, will be removed.

Thanks to all the volunteers and donors for their generosity of time, talent and treasure that made the restoration of Admiral Luce Park a success.

With the park restoration nearing completion, we will switch our efforts from restoration to park maintenance. We plan on having at least two park clean-up events annually and hope to have as many people as possible participate.



September 24, 2022: Volunteer Day at Luce Park



October 16, 2022: Volunteer Day at Admiral Luce Park

Gardening on Top the Hill by Claire O'Donnelly

Happy Fall, fellow gardeners! Aren't you just loving this wonderful weather? It is mother nature's gift to us to get those last-minute garden tasks taken care of.

What a summer it was! With record low rainfall it was hard to keep anything alive. My tomatoes grew long and leggy and being so spindly were hard to support. When we did get water, they guzzled it up and split their skins! Still the gazpacho and tomato soup were well worth the effort!

If you haven't already done so, this is the best time to pull all those seasonal crops from your beds and add them to your compost heap. The frost date for Newport is November 7th so don't make it any harder than it need be. Fighting with frozen soil is no fun at all! Similarly, if you are planning to plant bulbs, this would be a great time to do so. It is not too late to order bulbs from bulb catalogues as they will ship at the end of October. Why not try an exotic bulb that you have not tried before? We all have daffodils and tulips but why not try some Allium, or snowdrops, or Siberian squall. So many choices, so little garden!

It is also time to lift those Dahlias, Gladioli, Begonias, and Calla lilies, to name the few I have in my garden, I am sure you have others too.

You also still have time to divide and replant your perennials. Like me you may have noticed things getting a bit overcrowded. My tiger (or ditch) day lilies being the most determined and invasive of all! I am constantly moving them back to where they are supposed to be! My Asiatic Lilies have grown exponentially and really need to be relocated also. Just when you think your garden plan is done, mother nature throws her head back and lets out an enormous laugh at your naiveté!

Leave native plants to go to seed as they will feed the birds this winter. Plants such as asters, black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, coreopsis, corncockle, cornflowers, cosmos, daisies, evening primroses, flax, globe thistle, goldenrods and hibiscus are all great bird feeders. I am sure you have others. I also like to leave my hydrangea flowers on the plant as it gives me an illusion of winter flowers. For some reason the pink ones are particularly striking this year even spent as they are.

As I tell you every year, the more you do now the more fun spring gardening will be! Happy fall cleanup everyone.

If you are looking for a good "plant read" that is not a gardening book, check out "The Botanists Daughter" by Kate Nunn and if you want a book to inspire your garden for next year, check out "The Complete Gardener" by Monty Don. Claire

Historian's Corner by Mike Margonis

Henry G. Marquand and Linden Gate, Rhode Island Avenue

We continue with our series on our Gilded Age neighbors with a look at Henry G. Marquand, a wealthy businessman and patron of the arts.

Marquand was born and raised in New York City, becoming a Wall Street banker and Director of the Equitable Life Insurance Company. He made his considerable fortune speculating on foreign currency exchanges and Southern railroads. He was effectively forced to sell his stake in the railroad after the infamous Jay Gould monopolized the industry. After amassing his fortune, he turned his energy to art collecting, eventually becoming the president of the board of trustees for the new Metropolitan Museum of Art. He supervised the construction of the museum, which was designed by famed architect Calvert Vaux (designer of our own Beechwood and Beaulieu) and which started in 1871. The design was unpopular at the time and was quickly replaced by the modern Met building we know today. Marquand's friend Richard Morris Hunt designed the 5th Avenue façade as well as the Great Hall and Grand Staircase. Later wings were added by the firm McKim, Meade, and White. Although completely encased in Hunt's design visitors can still see Vaux's original structure within the museum. An avid art collector, Marquand donated the first Vermeer known to have entered a collection in the United States, "Woman with a Water Jug."

In 1873 Marquand had a summer home built in Newport by Hunt: Linden Gate, which was located on Rhode Island Avenue. Although destroyed by fire in 1973, the original brick and stone walls still line the property, and an entrance at the corner of Rhode Island Ave and Old Beach Road reads "Linden Gate." The property also contains a porter's lodge in the northeast corner of the property, on Gibbs Ave. The house itself contained extensive collections of art, earning the house the nickname Bric-a-Brac Hall.



Linden Gate

Famous painter John Singer Sargent was a guest at Linden Gate in October 1887 after his first visit to the United States and Newport in 1873. Sargent would eventually paint portraits of the family, including Mr. Marquand and his wife Elizabeth; his 1887 portrait of Elizabeth and 1897 portrait of Henry are shown below.

Elizabeth Marquand died in New York in 1895. Henry G. Marquand died in New York City on February 26th, 1902, leaving behind multiple homes including the one on Madison Avenue and 68th Street, designed by Richard Morris Hunt. The 1884 mansion was replaced in 1913 with a Beaux Arts Revival apartment building still known today as The Marquand. Mr. Marquand's body arrived in Newport on February 28th for burial in Island Cemetery. He is interred in a small family mausoleum still intact today. Linden Gate was inherited by his daughter Linda and her husband, Rev. Roderick Terry. The house remained in the family until 1951, when it was sold and turned into apartments.



Additional TOH Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to become more involved with TOH, there are several volunteer opportunities available. We invite you to join one of our committees or volunteer to help develop our quarterly newsletter. For more information and/or sign-up, please contact one of the representatives below:

Newsletter Publishing Support:

Sandy and Maureen Neville – TOHinfo@topofthehill.org or santiago.r.neville@icloud.com

Committee Chairs:

Community – Harry Elkin: community@topofthehill.org

Events – Susan Kelleher and Laurie Love: TOHevents@topofthehill.org

Membership – Donna Elkin: membership@topofthehill.org

Welcome – Susan McCoy: welcome@topofthehill.org

Newcomers – Larna Lackner: larnalackner@hotmail.com

Beautification – John Hirschboeck: beautification@topofthehill.org

Upcoming Events

Sunday, October 30, 2022: Annual Meeting at the Elks Lodge

Sunday, December 4, 2022: Holiday Party at the Edward King House

Useful Links and Contacts

City of Newport - <https://cityofnewport.com> City website

City of Newport Clean City - <https://cityofnewport.com/cleancity> Contains information about trash pickups, holiday and storm delays, recycling, scheduling trash pickups, dropping off garbage at waste management, etc.

Child and Family RI – childandfamilyri.com. Child & Family is the largest and most comprehensive social service provider in Newport County, and one of the largest in the State of Rhode Island. It is a center for community involvement – a place where people come together to give help, to receive help and to support the work of others. With state-of-the-art Community Centers in both Middletown and Providence, Child & Family provides important services and programs to thousands of children, teens, families, and elders throughout Rhode Island each year. Programs and Services for elders include Case Management Services, Information and Referral Services, the Friendly Visitor Program, and the Victims of Crime Program.

Report It - https://seeclickfix.com/newport_2 (requires registration) You can report problems such as potholes, litter, missed or uncollected garbage, snow covered sidewalks, graffiti, unsafe sidewalks, streetlights, etc.

Second Ward Councilor Charles Holder – Go to city website

<https://www.cityofnewport.com> and look him up by name in the Staff Directory tab (upper right, next to the “City of Newport” banner. You will then be able to email him through the city email system.

Top of the Hill (TOH) Neighborhood Association - <http://www.topofthehill.org>

NextDoor Top of the Hill – NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH OUR ASSOCIATION!

<https://nextdoor.com/neighborhood/topofthehillri--newport--ri/> NextDoor, in

conjunction with H&R Block, provided us with the \$10,000 grant for the revitalization of Luce Park.

NewportThisWeek- <https://www.newportthisweek.com> Informative weekly newspaper with useful local-event calendars, advertising including restaurants and businesses, and reporting on local issues.

Newport Daily News - <https://www.newportri.com/>

